

# Australasian Hydrographic Society

## HYDRO 2007 – “Focus on Asia”

HYDRO 2007 was held in the Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns, Australia from 22 to 24 November 2007. Workshops started from 21st November on topics such as CARIS, HYPACK, education and heritage.

### *Education Workshop*

An education workshop was organised by Venessa O'Connell for Wednesday 21st November 2007. The workshop involved the following guest speakers from education groups:

- Dr Brent Hall – Head of School of Surveying, Otago University
- Lieutenant Commander Richard Ball – Commanding Officer Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Hydrographic School
- Simon Ironside – Australasian Hydrographic Surveyors Certification Panel.

The workshop attendees were given an overview of the profession and some of its problems, with an update of current or future initiatives from the guest speakers. Delegates were split into three working groups to discuss and resolve solutions for the following topics and questions:

#### 1. Hydrographic Certification

- What is discouraging young surveyors from applying
  - Sea time
  - Lack of hydrographic specialist training in Australia
- CAT A, CAT B
  - Module supervised learning (training agreements)? - Experienced surveyors in workforce are not certified (i.e. no push to follow in footsteps)
  - Lack of further remuneration benefits for gaining certification
- How do we modify certification to make it attractive to all
  - Should certification be legislated
- Queensland state standards document/Association of Australian Ports and Marine Authorities

#### 2. Shortage of Surveyors

- How do we attract the young?
- How do we keep them interested?
- Remuneration and attractive salary – is this enough
  - Is the problem a high school/technical and further education/university issue?
  - We are a small segment – is marketing the answer?
- Promotion through DVDs/newspapers/brochures
- Promote benefits of Hydro to current survey students
- Can be expensive (cost/benefit analysis)
- Can traineeships be the answer?

#### 3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – Spatial Sciences Institute (SSI)

- Is it needed?
- Should it be for all hydrographic surveyors or only the certified?
- Who should stipulate points for an event?
- How many hours/points are reasonable per year?
- Are there enough events in Australasia in any given year to warrant CPD?

- Affordability of events to surveyors?
- Should H1 and H2 surveyors need the same or different level of points/hours?

Venessa O'Connell is currently preparing a paper discussing the outcomes of the workshop. Overall, for many of the attendees, the workshop was their first exposure to the skills shortage and education problems. Attendees were enthusiastic about moving forward to make changes in both training delivery and promotion of the profession with a focus on enabling module-based learning for young surveyors whilst working full-time. It was mentioned by many that SSI should become more involved in the promotion of the Hydrography Commission. It was agreed unanimously that CPD should be required; however, it needs to be an online or easy process for surveyors to complete. It was also decided that legislation is definitely required to ensure hydrographic surveyors are certified into the future.

### *Conference Papers*

The conference papers were focussed around the theme of meeting the challenges of the littoral zone. Papers ranged from the hydrographic expertise and unique equipment utilised by the hydrographic surveyors involved with re-floating the Pasha Bulkerto tidal measurements and studies on sea-level rise. Other highlights were Lidar survey in the northern Torres Strait and accurate tsunami modelling using a bathymetric data set for the Solomon Islands' earthquake.

The equipment and instrument exhibition hall was extremely well represented by companies from all over the world.

Education and the shortage of surveyors was a constant theme discussed by all delegates throughout the conference. It was also noticed that the average age of participants was quite high and that young people are under-represented in the hydrographic profession.

### *Conference Dinner*

The conference award dinner was held at the Cairns Convention Centre on Friday 23rd November 2007 and it was attended by over 100 delegates and partners. Awards were presented for 2006 and 2007 to the following recipients:

#### *2006 Awards*

- Maritime Safety Achievement?Mr Christopher Roberts – RAN
- Scientific & Technological Achievement?Dr Matthew Dunbabin – Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Literary & Media Achievement?Mr Rob Berry
- Literary & Media Achievement?Mr Greg Eccleston

#### *•Career Achievement*

Mr Bob Waugh – Fugro

- Service Achievement – Treasury Mr Ronald Furness

#### *2007 Awards*

- Corporate Achievement – Achievement in Support, Training  
Ocean Mapping Group

- Corporate Achievement – Public Sector (Hydrography)

Deployable Geospatial

Support Team, RAN AHS